

AFGHAN WOMEN AND CHILDREN
RELIEF ACT OF 2001

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, we are all awaiting the bill that we have all worked so hard to produce this week, the Aviation Security Act. I will not speak about that act because, obviously, we have others who have worked very hard on the bill. We want to make sure that everyone is able to speak for or against it before we pass it. But the good news is, we are going to pass it.

I did want to take this opportunity, though, during morning business to mention a bill that passed last night. It is a bill that was cosponsored by every woman in the Senate. There are 13 women in the Senate. All of us cosponsored this bill. It is to make sure that the Congress speaks on the priorities that we believe are imperative as we give aid to Afghanistan, that women be included in that aid.

As so many of us know, the Taliban treated women especially cruelly, not allowing them access to health care. Not allowing a male doctor to see a woman effectively kept women out of the system because women are not allowed to work, and therefore female doctors are not allowed to practice under the Taliban.

In addition, women have not been able to go outside their homes without a male escort, so many times a widow would not be able to get the food necessary to feed her children or the health care for her children.

Women were not allowed to be educated under the Taliban, so we see 5- and 6-year-old girls who have had no education whatsoever because they have lived under the Taliban regime.

The bill that passed unanimously in the Senate last night spoke to those issues to say we want United States aid to be especially there for the people of Afghanistan as we rebuild the country.

We are seeing the Taliban flee. Thank goodness they are fleeing. But we want to make sure that we start playing catchup, that we give women and young girls the chance to be educated along with the young boys, that we bring women doctors in especially to give access to health care for the women of Afghanistan.

The mortality rate of children in Afghanistan is stunning. It is 25 percent. The mortality rate for children in that country is 25 percent. The major cause of that mortality rate, in the 21st century, is contaminated food and water. That is the most stunning statistic of all. In the 21st century, when clean water and uncontaminated food is universally available throughout the world, that 25 percent of the children would be dying from dysentery and contaminated food and bad water is just the saddest of all statistics.

So we do want to go in fast and try to stem the tide of the mortality of children and women, and make sure that young boys and young girls are treated equally in education, that women have a chance to participate in a new government that hopefully

would be a government of the people of Afghanistan that includes all of the tribes of that country.

I am very proud that the women of the Senate came together to speak especially forcefully on this issue. We did pass the bill last night. So I am very pleased that we were able to persuade Senator WELLSTONE to raise his hold on the bill, which I thought was an unfair hold. I did not appreciate that he would take a bill such as this hostage for another bill that he had, but, nevertheless, he did, and so it took us 2 weeks to pass a bill which should have been passed in minutes.

Having said that, I do want to say, I am very proud of the women of the Senate for coming together to highlight this issue, to speak with one voice, and to say that U.S. aid will always be there for women as well as men on an equal basis, for girls as well as boys on an equal basis.

So I am proud that we passed the bill. It now goes to the House Representative DEBORAH PRYCE is working with Democratic and Republican women on the House side to try to see that this bill goes through on an expedited basis to support our President in putting forth more aid for Afghanistan that will be equally distributed among the population.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. DOMENICI and Mr. BOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 1717 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, I ask unanimous consent that this Senator be recognized following the remarks of the Senator from Montana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak and use whatever time I may consume. I do not think I will go past 10 minutes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Reserving the right to object, it is not my intention to object except that I understand Senator DORGAN sought, by unanimous consent, to be recognized. The bill is now here. I ask unanimous consent that there be no more than 10 minutes for each of the speakers so that we can get to the bill in due course.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is the current order. The

Senator from Montana sought to modify that order. Is there objection?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I believe the Senator from Montana will agree to speak for no more than 10 minutes, as will the Senator from North Dakota. Do they agree to speak no more than 10 minutes so we can get to the bill?

Mr. DORGAN. I agree to that request. I also want to speak on the bill. I understand when the bill arrives there will be comments by the chairman, by Senator HUTCHISON, and others. I want to make a comment about the farm bill. In fact, I will be glad to keep that to 10 minutes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. It is important when the bill is ready that we proceed to it so we can pass it back to the House to stay on time.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I understand the airport security bill is ready. I am going to be speaking on something else, but it is my intent to allow the committee to proceed so the Senate can consider this bill. I am going to speak on the airport security legislation, but I will make the remarks on the farm bill following this action.

AVIATION AND TRANSPORTATION
SECURITY ACT—CONFERENCE
REPORT

Mr. HOLLINGS. Under a unanimous consent agreement, I call up the conference report on the bill, S. 1447, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 1447), "to improve aviation security, and for other purposes," having met have agreed that the Senate recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the House, and agree to the same with an amendment, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of November 16, 2001.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there is now 90 minutes of debate evenly divided between the chairman and ranking member.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I first want to thank Sam Whitehorn, who is now changing clothes to come to the Chamber, and Kevin Kayes. Both Sam Whitehorn and Kevin Kayes are on my Commerce Committee staff. They have been working hard all night